

Sociology of Work

Programme, Assessment Criteria and Reading Material

Department of Social Sciences

Scientific Area: Sociology

Professors for 2025/26

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Summary and objectives

Sociology of Work is a key subject in the curriculum offered by ISEG, as reflected in the concepts and empirical data that will be presented and discussed during the lectures and practical exercises. The aim is to have a balance between theoretical lectures and practical exercises so that students may reflect on current issues in the areas of work, employment and firms/organizations.

Modern managers are expected to strategically plan and implement processes that will increase the competitiveness of their firms and organizations in the global market. Competitiveness goes well beyond managing technological innovation and its implementation, nor can it be achieved by focusing mostly or solely on cost reduction strategies and organizational restructuring. It hinges instead, on taking a broader view on the socio-organizational aspects and innovation, while ensuring that the workforce is motivated and fit-for-purpose. The latter includes achieving a sustainable work-life balance and equality. Concepts such as ethics and social corporate responsibility are also increasingly important.

The course Sociology of Work aims to provide an in-depth knowledge and foster a critical discussion of the complex transformations faced by firms and organizations in today's world. These transformations can only be understood when placed in the broader context, not only of globalization, but also informational society, societal inequalities and environmental issues.

I – PROGRAMME and REFERENCES

1. Sociology of work: an introduction

- 1.1. Main concepts, objectives and research methods.
- 1.2. Examples of real world applications: insights from Sociology of Work

References:

Cummings, T. (2004), Organizational Development and change, in J. Boonstra, *Dynamics of Organizational Change and Learning*, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons, pp. 25-42.

2. Socio-economic transformations: main trends and consequences for professions and labour relations

- 2.1. Information and communication technologies, informational societies and artificial intelligence
- 2.2. Changing professional structures
- 2.3. Workforce changes and labour segmentation

References:

The CORE team (2017): The Economy: Economics for a Changing World, UNITs 16.1, 16.2, 16.11, 17.4 to 17.7 (<http://www.core-econ.org/the-economy/book/text/0-3-contents.html#contents>)

EIGE (2023), Artificial intelligence, platform work and gender equality, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 18-61. (https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/artificial-intelligence-platform-work-and-gender-equality-report?language_content_entity=en)

Grint, K. & Nixon, D. (2015), The meaning of work in the Contemporary Economy, in K. Grint and D. Nixon, *The Sociology of Work*, London: Polity Press, 4th Edition, pp: 297-304.

Reich, Robert (1992), “The information age. The three Jobs of the Future”, in R. Reich, *The Work of Nations*, New York City, Vintage Press, pp: 204-211.

3. New forms of work, new models of organization within firms and inclusive models of work

- 3.1. Flexibility in labour relations and new forms of work
- 3.2. Quality of working life and dignified work
- 3.2. Inclusive forms of work organization: examples around gender equality and work-life balance

References:

Eurofound (2022), The rise in telework: Impact on working conditions and regulations, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 7-44.

(https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef22005en.pdf)

The CORE team (2017): The Economy: Economics for a Changing World, UNITs 3.9 and 3.10 (<http://www.core-econ.org/the-economy/book/text/0-3-contents.html#contents>)

Grote, G. & Guest, D. (2017) The case for reinvigorating quality of working life research, human relations, 70(2) 149–167.

4. The role of social partners and the diversity of systems of industrial relations

4.1. What do Unions do?

4.2. Different models of national industrial relations systems

4.3. The example of industrial relations in Portugal

References:

Western, B. & Rosenfeld, J. (2011), Unions, Norms, and the Rise in U.S. Wage Inequality. *American Sociological Review*, 76(4) 513–537.

EUROFOUND (2017), *Mapping Varieties of Industrial Relations: Eurofound's Analytical Framework Applied*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Chapter 3, pp. 21-38.

The CORE team (2017): The Economy: Economics for a Changing World, UNIT 16.9 (<http://www.core-econ.org/the-economy/book/text/0-3-contents.html#contents>)

II – Assessment criteria and evaluation processes

In accordance with the “Regulamento Geral de Avaliação de Conhecimentos”, the assessment rules in the course of Sociology of Work are as follows:

1. “Época normal” (Regular assessment method)

1.1 – Ongoing assessment during the course/semester and “Época normal” (Regular assessment period)

In this case, students are required to attend and participate in classes, as well as to undertake group activities. This component is composed of the following elements:

- a) Participation and performance in in-class activities and formal exercises in small groups (three to four students): 40%.

This component requires the undertaking of **group activities** done in small groups in class during the course/semester (representing 1/2 of the grade for element a)), as well as one of two **formal group exercises** (also known as mid-terms and representing 1/2 of the grade for element a)). Students are allowed to consult class notes, textbooks and the other material provided for the latter, but not laptops or mobile/smartphones. If a student fails to take one of the formal group exercises, the grade of the other group exercise will be attributed. If a student participates in two formal group exercises, the best of the two grades will be awarded.

In order to achieve the highest grade in this component of in-class activities, students will need to attend all **group activities**.

- b) An individual ‘closed book’ (i.e. no books, slides, notes or similar external resources are allowed) written test (exam) - “Época Normal”: 60% (or 100% if more beneficial for the student).

- This is scheduled by the academic services and includes the whole contents of the course.
- A minimum classification of 7 in the exam is required to take into account the grade obtained in the ongoing assessment during the course/semester (element a) above).

The attribution of a grade higher than 17 may require a complementary oral exam.

1.2. An individual ‘closed book’ written test (exam) - “Época Normal”

This is scheduled by the academic services (100%)

2. Written individual ‘closed book’ test (“Época de recurso”)

This is scheduled by the academic services (100%).

Students are expected to take a written individual test that covers the whole contents of the course and are not allowed to consult any material. This form of assessment is available to:

- students who did not opt for the previous evaluation process (“Época Normal”);
- students who failed the semester (“Época normal”);
- students who wish to improve their grades.

For students undertaking continuous assessment during the semester, the same set of rules mentioned under 1.1. (above) will apply, except in the cases where students undertake this written individual test to improve on their grades. In the latter case, only the results of the written individual test (and complementary oral exam if needed) will be considered.

The attribution of a grade higher than 17 may require a complementary oral exam.

III – Reading material

See above for each section of the programme.

Further reading (available at the library):

GOTTFRIED, H; EDGELL, S.; GRANTER, E. (eds) (2015), *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Work and Employment*, London: Sage.

GRINT, K.; NIXON D. (2015), *The Sociology of Work*, London, Polity Press, 4th edition.

3. Websites

<http://www.oecd.org> (namely the report titled “Global employment trends”...)

<http://www.eurofound.ie/>

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat>

<http://www.ilo.org/>

<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global> (see “Human Development Report”)

<http://www.core-econ.org/the-economy/book/text/0-3-contents.html#contents> (see specific units for each section of the programme).